

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-6, 8, 17 and 19-24 were rejected. Claims 25-32 were withdrawn by the Examiner from consideration. By entry of this amendment, claims 1, 6, 17, 19 and 21 have been amended. No claims have been cancelled and new claim 33 has been added. Consequently, claims 1-6, 8, 17, 19-24 and 33 are pending.

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure because of several informalities in paragraphs 0022 and 0026. In response, the identified paragraphs have been replaced in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Therefore, withdraw of these objections is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings because of the feature "external groove" of claims 6 and 19. This language has been cancelled from the claims. Therefore, withdraw of this objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 6 and 19 were rejected under §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner cited the feature "external groove" of claims 6 and 19. This language has been cancelled from the claims. Therefore, withdraw of these objections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 17 and 21 were objected to by the Examiner because of various informalities. These claims have been amended pursuant to the Examiner's suggestions. Therefore, withdraw of these objections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 17 and 20-22 were under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wilson et al (031) in view of Li (915). The undersigned respectfully disagrees and requests reconsideration of this rejection. Specifically, the combination of Wilson and Li (915) does not teach, suggest or disclose all features of claim 1 or claim 17.

Claim 1 is directed to a receiver lock for securing an object to a receiver. The lock includes a linear shaft and a locking head having a shaft insertion end and a key insertion end. The insertion end is selectively coupled to a first end of the shaft. A protective covering partially enclosing an axial length of the locking head and located on the shaft insertion end of the locking head. Only partially enclosing the locking head allows metal to metal contact for a securing tool as previously described. For example, a vise grip can be used to hold the locking head between the protective covering and a cap covering the key insertion end. As a result, the elastomeric material of the protective covering is not damaged by the tool. The protective covering is also compressible between the locking head and the receiver to form a sealed barrier between the locking head and the linear shaft, thereby excluding water, dust, dirt and debris from the internal locking mechanism of the locking head. (para. 35, lines 12-14).

The protective covering 134 of Wilson is constructed of foam and is designed to prevent rattling; it is implied by dampening. (Wilson, col. 6, lines 19, 33-34). Such a dampening collar constructed of foam would not be weather resistant. As a result, Wilson does not teach a covering that would form a sealed barrier. Li (915) does not teach, disclose or suggest a protective covering as claimed. For at least this reason, claim 1 is non-obvious in view of the combination of Wilson and Li (915).

Therefore, claim 1 is believed to be allowable and reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested. Further, dependent claims 3, 5 and 8 are also allowable at least based on direct dependence on allowable independent claim 1.

Claim 17 is directed to a receiver lock for securing a ball mount to a receiver. The lock includes a linear shaft, a locking head having a shaft insertion end and a key insertion end, the shaft insertion end selectively coupled to a first end of the shaft, and a stop member located at a second opposite end of the shaft. The lock includes an elastomeric protective covering partially enclosing an axial length of the locking head. (para. 35, line 3). The protective covering includes a portion of the same diameter as a cylindrical outer peripheral surface of the locking head.

The Examiner has asserted that it would have been obvious to mount the covering 134 of Wilson to enclose an axial length of the lock head, in view of the teaching of Li (915). The

undersigned respectfully disagrees at least for the following reason. One with ordinary skill in the art would appreciate the foam material of 134 that is designed for dampening rattling would be inadequate in providing axially protection to the shaft. Any tool used to grasp the outer edge of the locking head, such as during a repair operation while installed on a receiver, would put the cover at risk of tearing or damage. One skilled in the art would not make this combination because it would not result in a product that could perform desired purpose of the claimed invention.

In addition, neither Wilson or Li (915) teach, disclose or suggest the feature of an elastomeric protective covering.

Therefore, claim 17 is believed to be allowable and reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested. Further, dependent claims 20-22 are also allowable at least based on direct dependence on allowable independent claim 17.

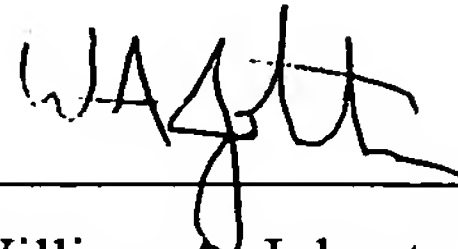
New independent claim 33 is dependent for claim 17 and is directed to a receiver lock assembly having a protective covering that is compressible between the locking head and the receiver to form a sealed barrier between the locking head and the linear shaft. Dependent claim 33 is allowable at least based on direct dependence on allowable independent claim 17.

The Examiner has also made several rejections of other dependent claims. The remaining pending dependent claims are allowable at least based on direct or indirect dependence on allowable independent claims 1 and 17.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims of this application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims of this application is respectfully solicited. Furthermore, if the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 2/14/07



William A. Johnston
(Reg. No.: 47,687)

Calfee, Halter & Griswold LLP
1400 McDonald Investment Center
800 Superior Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44114-2688
Phone (216) 622-8576
Fax (216) 241-0816

CUSTOMER NO. 24024